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[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture and commercial crops, irrigation, stock raising, natural resources, production and supply, waterways, railways and roads of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates between the plateau of Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf discussed as one geographical unit rather than by political boundary, see M1 Middle East, Cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 340-370.]

[For information on the topography, occupations and relative productivity of the desert plateau, and of the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 427-449.]

2: Dowson G-5 (1929-30) 1932 MHI Iraq MHI

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About four-fifths of the country consists of unproductive or slightly productive desert, steppe, marsh and hill masses. The productive core is divided broadly into two regions within which cultivation is practised regularly. The northern region is fed by rainfall supplemented by perennial streams rising in the mountains and, to a limited extent, by lift from the rivers. The southern region largely depends upon irrigation, supplied by canals drawn from the river system, following winter rainfall. The former may be appropriately called the Rainfall Zone, and the latter the Irrigation Zone. Actually the southward extension of the northern rainfall varies annually, while the date gardens of the Basra Liwa constitute a distinct (and of course economically a very important) study. But this does not affect the correctness of the broad picture presented.

Reference to Table I will show that the region of cultivated and cultivable land within the Rainfall Zone covers about 41,000 square

TABLE I. APPROXIMATE CLASSIFICATION OF LAND SURFACE, 1930

Expressed in square kilometres

Liwa	Total area all land	Hill mass	Cultivated Region: Rainfall Zone: ? 3% hill mass	Cultivated Region: Rainfall Zone: Plains	Cultivated Region: Irrigation Zone: Canal fed territory†	Cultivated Region: Irrigation Zone: Machine fed territory†	Additional potentially cultivable territory	Total cultivated and cultivable region	Territory containing tapu holdings	Size of holdings in misharas*: 1-100	101 to 500	501 to 1,000	Over 1,001
Mosul	45,800	9,350	190	14,580	—	—	270	15,040	7,870	—	—	—	—
Arbil	16,600	7,620	150	7,010	—	—	—	7,160	2,420	7,418	728	500	—
Sulimani	9,500	6,400	130	2,420	—	—	—	2,550	2,280	—	—	—	—
Kirkuk	20,800	—	—	12,020	—	—	3,240	15,260	6,280	—	—	—	—
Diyala	16,200	—	—	710	2,760	90	260	3,820	3,410	4,092	—	546	—
Baghdad	22,100	—	—	—	1,710	2,270	890	4,870	1,500	162	220	120	360
Dulaim	124,500	—	—	—	920	630	20	1,570	920	2,344	109	121	3
Karbala	21,200	—	—	—	680	—	20	680	620	—	—	—	—
Hilla	8,100	—	—	—	4,570	330	1,630	6,530	2,380	452	364	96	82
Kut	16,400	—	—	—	4,680	3,860	2,170	10,710	2,580	—	—	—	—
Diwaniya	83,000	—	—	—	3,770	2,180	5,520	11,470	2,270	8,378	—	155	69
Muntaf	38,700	—	—	—	4,440	270	370	5,080	6,260	—	—	—	—
Amara	19,700	—	—	—	5,670	1,010	—	6,680	110	—	10	5	50
Basra	10,900	—	—	—	610‡	60	110	780	1,190	—	—	—	—
Totals	453,500	23,370	470	36,740	29,790	10,700	14,500	92,200	40,090	—	—	—	—

*Where information was available. Such information must not be presumed to be exhaustive. A mishara = 2,300 sq. metres or thereabouts.

†Territories so classified are at present very incompletely irrigated. ‡Tidally watered date gardens.

kilometres, and that within the Irrigation Zone about 51,000 square kilometres. These figures represent 9 per cent. and 11 per cent. of the total land surface of the country respectively. The cultivation is preponderantly of an extensive character. Only a fraction of these zones, possibly from a fifth to a tenth, appears to be actually cultivated in any given year. So that land is available for a very great development of agriculture, when other factors are favourable.

The information given in the table regarding the size of holdings is derived from fiscal returns. Although the classification of these holdings by area cannot be expected to be accurate, the figures possibly give some indication of the frequency of larger and smaller holdings in the districts actually concerned. The latter must not be taken to coincide with the cultivated areas of the liwas themselves.

3. Agricultural Population

3. In any general study of the land tenure of a country it is desirable to know the numbers and distribution of the agricultural population. Thus it would greatly assist in planning development in el 'Iraq if trust-

133 phrates join together in their lower courses to form the Shatt al-Arab, which is 185 kilometres long, navigable throughout its length, passes by the port of Basra, and flows into the Persian Gulf. In some places, this river is one kilometre wide. Baghdad is on the Tigris.

There are also several lakes in Iraq; the largest is Al-Hammar, with an area of 5,200 square kilometres.

• 132 The climate in the west of the country is Mediterranean and sub-tropical, with a long dry summer (lasting over seven months), frequent changes of temperature, with an average of 33.8° C.; in winter the average temperature is 9° to 10° C. In the east of the country, the average is the same in the summer, but the winter in the north-east is colder, with an average of 7° to 7.7° C. The rainfall varies from a yearly average of 38 to 40 centimetres in the highlands (probably twice as much in the mountains) to a maximum annual precipitation of 10 centimetres in the south-western desert region.

631 The country is divided administratively into the following fourteen provinces or "liwas": Baghdad, Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk, Karbala, Hilla, Diwaniya, Kut, Amara, Basra, Diyala (chief town: Baquba), Dulaim (chief town: Ramadi), Muntafiq (chief town: Nasiriya), and Sulaimaniya.

2:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
IRAQ MHI

Chapter Five

IRAQ

The Land

131 The area of Iraq within its present frontiers is approximately 175,000 square miles. It is most conveniently divided into three distinct geographical sections: the Mesopotamian plain, the Uplands, and the Folded Mountain Belt. The first of these is historically the most important for it was the plain which nursed the great civilizations of the past, and its two great rivers which nourished them.

133 *The Plain.* To the north-east the southern alluvial plain follows the foothills of the Persian mountains up from the sea, turns south-east across the old river estuaries at Samarra and Hit, and returns parallel to and west of the Euphrates. Within these limits the soil is stoneless alluvium. The two rivers flow in channels somewhat above the rest of the plain, which is consequently liable to be flooded during the high-water period in the spring when the snows melt in Kurdistan; local rain has comparatively little effect on the rivers. The Tigris rises in late March or early April, the rise at Baghdad being sometimes as much as 23 feet; the Euphrates rises two or three weeks later than the Tigris, a maximum of about 14 feet (at Faluja); both rivers are at their lowest in September–October. At no point is the plain higher than 150 feet above sea-level.

132 The annual rainfall in the plain averages about 6 inches only; this rain occurs usually between mid-November and mid-March, the wettest month being February; but it is impossible to generalize, as a complete season's rainfall may occur in a space of three weeks, the remainder of the winter being dry. [241] Cultivation in the plain depends almost entirely on irrigation, the rainfall often being insufficient to mature a winter crop.

133 The rivers, which have frequently changed their courses throughout history, unite about sixty miles above the city of Basra in a single great channel, the Shatt al-Arab. Also above Basra is the marshland of the Muntafiq and Amara *liwas*, where a distinctive group of Arabs—the 'marsh Arabs'—live on fish and the produce of their mud-banks and swampy islands, or tend their buffaloes from shallow-draft canoes.

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
Iraq MHI

The Uplands. This region, which approximately corresponds to ancient Assyria, is undulating gravel steppe and rich ploughland, with some stone. Here, in an average year, the rainfall of 13 inches is sufficient to yield a winter crop without irrigation. In the districts of Kirkuk and Irbil, however, the rainfall is supplemented by the *kahriz* (underground water channels) system of water production, which is practised even more widely in Persia. Mosul, Irbil, and Kirkuk are respectively 703, 1,250, and 1,087 feet above sea-level.

Between the two rivers in this area and the south of lat. 36° N. is a wedge of uncultivable gypsum desert called al-Jezira (the Island).

The Mountain Belt. The crescent of mountain country included in the north-east frontier comprises the basins of the rivers Diala, Lesser Zab, Greater Zab, and Khabur. It is peopled by Kurds, a hardy mountain race, living an entirely different life from the Arabs of the plain and uplands. Villages are stone-built and shelved into the sides of the hills, with tall silver poplars and terraced cultivation, including vineyards and tobacco. Large areas of mountainside are covered with scrub oak; the summits provide summer pastures.

Between the Euphrates valley and the western frontiers is a large section of al-Badia, the Syrian Desert, populated only by nomad tribes of bedouin with their flocks and camels.

Climate. The climate of Iraq is extreme. In the plains the January mean temperature is 44–52°F.; in July, 86–96°F. In the mountains altitude decreases temperature in both seasons and increases the rainfall to as much as 40 inches.

The importance of Iraq's geographical situation has been obvious since Alexander's armies linked Europe with India twenty-two centuries ago. Through it ran not only the shortest but the easiest routes from southern Europe to the Persian Gulf and to India until the discovery of the Cape route. From the time of the Babylonian empire the trade of the Far East tended to pass through Iraq to the Levant ports on the Mediterranean. In the nineteenth century the desire to control or to prevent others controlling this route involved Great Britain, Russia, and Germany in attempts to dominate Iraq. The discovery of oil and the growth of air communications in the twentieth century have given the country a positive place in the political framework of the world and the former has provided the resources to transform it into a progressive modern nation.

THE PEOPLE

Population Statistics. The single official census that has been

44:Matthews and Akrawi S,G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
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873 usually hold the priority over primary schools. If a good building is vacant
346 it is usually the secondary school that gets the preference. Thus, in all parts of Iraq most intermediate and preparatory schools are housed in comparatively new buildings, with fairly large classrooms (16½ × 23½ feet), and with laboratories of larger size. An intermediate school usually has one common laboratory or science room. The better preparatory schools, such as the Central Preparatory School in Baghdad, have separate laboratories for physics, chemistry, and biology, with storerooms attached and with a machine for producing gas. Secondary schools are also more favored with a larger amount of space for playgrounds than primary schools have.

EQUIPMENT

873 The same is also true with regard to furniture and equipment. There are three types of classroom seats: desks, with seats attached, for one or for two students, and a tablet armchair for a single student much like the ones in American advanced classrooms, though not as good in quality. Blackboards are made of wood and are usually small and inadequate, often definitely bad. However, a new kind of plaster built-in blackboard large enough to fill the entire front wall, and sometimes the side walls too, was first used at the Higher Teachers College, and its use is spreading in the secondary schools. Laboratory equipment is supplied to intermediate schools from the central store of the Ministry of Education according to a standard list drawn up by the Ministry. A much larger collection of laboratory equipment is usually sent to the preparatory schools. The older schools are better equipped than the others, while some of the schools that were started during World War II or shortly before are meagerly supplied. Arabic maps are imported from England or from Egypt. Most of the laboratory equipment was imported from France and England and some from Germany. As there is no central workshop for repairing laboratory equipment and as most teachers have no experience in repair work, laboratory instruments tend to get out of order rather quickly, which results in a great
[132] deal of waste. For this reason and because of the great amount of dust in the Iraqi air, equipment acquires a dilapidated look which requires an extraordinary amount of care on the part of the teacher to avoid. The fact that teachers change frequently is an additional factor in the lack of care that is apparent in laboratory equipment.

TEACHING AND METHOD

873 Methods of teaching in secondary schools do not differ in their essentials
876 from those of the primary schools. In the main they are based on the

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
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131 interspersed by several large lakes and in the south by extensive stretches of marshland. In many areas the plain is lower than the rivers, and the riverain lands are flooded each spring when the waters are swollen by the rains and the melting snows from the mountains. The Tigris normally reaches flood level in March or April; the Euphrates, a few weeks later. Both rivers are [312] tapped by networks of irrigation canals, while dams constructed at Hindiyah on the Euphrates and at Kut on the Tigris serve to divert the rivers into forked channels and increase the area under irrigation.

North of this alluvial plain, the country gives way to undulating uplands with an average elevation of about 1,000 feet. The river valleys are more sharply defined and sometimes confined within narrow gorges. The land between the rivers in this region is mainly steppe or gypsum desert and is known, as in Syria, as the Al Jazira. Toward the north and the northeast, the valleys of the Tigris and its tributaries are encircled by lofty mountain ranges, with peaks rising to from 10,000 to 15,000 feet, which form part of the Kurdish highlands, straddling the boundaries between Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The entire southwestern half of the country, from the Euphrates to the southern and the western frontiers, is gravel or sandy desert, a portion of the Great Syrian Desert.

132 The climate of Iraq varies with the topography, but in general it is characterized by hot, dry summers and cold, damp winters. Most of the rainfall is concentrated in the months from November to April, with the maximum precipitation during January and February. It averages 4 to 6 inches a

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132 year in the plains of the delta region and 12 to 16 inches in the upland districts, while in some sections of the mountains it increases to around 50 inches. The summer temperatures are uniformly high and may reach 110° to 125° F. in the central and the southern provinces. The daily fluctuations are slight in the Gulf region, but they become more pronounced toward the interior. During the winter months snows are rare outside the highland districts, but frosts are occasionally encountered as far south as Basra. In January, the coldest month, the mean maximum temperature averages 60° to 65° F. at Basra, 58° to 61° F. at Baghdad and 50° to 55° F. at Mosul; the mean minimum temperature, 38° to 42° F., 44° to 47° F. and 34° to 36° F., respectively. The mean maximum temperatures approximate 104° to 110° F. in all 3 localities in July, while the mean minimum temperatures range from 76° to 82° F. in Basra to 72° to 75° F. in Mosul. In midsummer the mean daily relative humidity rarely rises above 25 to 35 per cent on the plains, although it is often excessive in the Gulf area. Northwest winds, known locally as the *shamal*, blow irregularly throughout the year. They are especially strong and desiccating during the summer months, and, in the south, are usually laden with dust and sand.

POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Population

161 The population, according to the official census for 1947, was estimated at 4,799,500, including an unknown number of Bedouin, roughly calculated at about 250,000. The majority of the inhabitants are of mixed Arabic stock, representing a relatively homogeneous blend of ancient Semitic and Indo-European strains which has evolved over
162 centuries of successive conquests. About 95
795 per cent of the people are Moslems; slightly over one half are Shiites; and most of the
[131] remainder are Sunnites. The Kurds, who

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